

Trip Report for WCC & HRCKC Upper Delaware trip 7/19/09
<http://picasaweb.google.com/kanoer/090719DelawareTrip>

Conditions for this trip were almost ideal. The Barryville gage read 3.6 feet, the water temperature was approximately 73 and the air temperature was in the 70s throughout the day. Winds were light and the sky was cloudless throughout the morning with high cumulous clouds showing up during the afternoon.

Our group consisted of Mike & Jim, Paul & Brandon, Jim & Joan paddling tandem canoes, Harold in an inflatable pedal powered kayak and Ben, Clayton & Ralph in hard kayaks.

Everyone was at the take out opposite the Westfall Township municipal building. It was poorly marked so some people passed it by, but everyone was there well before 9:30. We chipped in \$19 for the \$2 per boat launch fee and the \$5 parking fee for one car to be left at the Kittatinny Stair Step access and went to their Matamoras base to purchase the contract.

We reached the access just as another group of private boaters was launching, and ran the shuttle using Jim's Suburban to bring all the drivers back in comfort.

After launching at about 11:30 we ferried immediately to river center to avoid some scratchy spots and were surprised that at 3.7 feet most of Stair Step rapids was washed out and offered little excitement. The big excitement just below Stair Step included a couple of boats that ran through the appealing looking center of an old eel weir and got bounced over some rocks and debris in the center chute. River right would have been a better deal.

Mongaup rapids was a little more exciting with 1 and ½ foot standing waves that gave everyone a good bounce and a little water in the open boats. Several of us eddied out near the top on river right for photos of the rest.

We stopped for lunch and a swim at the sandy beach on river left just below the Mongaup and spent a few minutes exploring the ruins of the D&H Canal lock that operated for nearly a century through the 1930s. As we were about to leave Jim and Mike deployed a large kite ready to take advantage of the tail wind. It flew ok but didn't move the canoe too well.

After a bit of flat water we entered Butler Rift where the Delaware drops in a long smooth run over about a quarter mile. The standing waves in river center were pretty high and led us into the spectacular Hawk's Nest canyon with sheer cliffs on river left of about 250 feet.

This led into the Mill Rift with some more action and a large rock creating a hole in river center. Just after the railroad bridge that marks the exit to Mill Rift we stopped at Firemen's beach on river left for a short swim opportunity.

The elephant's feet rock formations on river right marked the remains of an eel weir that had been in place for over 50 years and now created some more standing waves.

We watched a couple of cliff jumpers opposite Eddy Farm and marveled at their courage. (I understand that one of our NCSP friends watches someone land on a rock and get pretty badly injured earlier in the season.)

One more interesting wave train brought us to the flat water near our take out.

We were off the river and had our cars loaded by around 4:15 having paddled about 7 ½ miles of beautiful scenery mixed with a bunch of fun wave trains.

Jim Mc Loone